Proposal for a separate human rights department

1184. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item reported in the Ahmedabad based Times of India of 17th December, 1998 under the caption, 'Why a Separate Human Rights Department';

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are planning to convene a conference of the Education Ministers of states to arrive at a consensus; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Restructuring of undergraduate courses

1185. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI: SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Kothari Commission had pointed out in 1996 that our undergraduate degree is not treated as equivalent to an undergraduate degree in other countries; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken, if any, for restructuring of undergraduate courses with coordination between the CBSE and the University of Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Preservation of Literature and Monuments of Assam

1186. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what measures Government have taken to preserve the old books on literature and religion at Majuli Island and to preserve the monuments of Aham Kingdom in Sibsagar and Jorhat districts of Assam;

(b) whether Government have any plans to preserve Kaspur monumnets of Kachari Kingdom in Kachar district of the State; and

(c) what other measures have been taken for preservation of ancient monuments by the Archaeological Department of Government of India?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Growing Illiteracy in the Country

1187. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India will be the most illiterate country in 2000;

(b) which are the Major areas of the country still having least literacy rate; and

(c) what are the major reasons for illiteracy still growing even after Government's various literacy programmes?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) As per the 1991 census the literacy rate in the country was 52.21% and the number of illiterates in the country was 32.88 crores against a total population of 84.63 crores. The figures relating to subsequent increase in the number of illiterates in the country will be known only after the results of 2001 Census is